



ROBERT BRUNI PHOTOS

INSIDE UP

ATTIC, CRAWL SPACE PROVIDE ROOM FOR CRAFTSMAN TO GROW

BY ALLISON KELTNER

When you need to add square footage but can't build out, you have to build in. That's what Drew Hubbell of Hubbell & Hubbell Architects did on this registered historical Craftsman bungalow in Mission Hills.

Originally, the 1,177-square-foot home, built in 1910, had two bedrooms and one bathroom. But with two growing children, the owner, who wishes to remain anonymous, knew the family needed more space. Due to the historical designation, no significant additions could be built onto the house to modify the exterior, especially on the front façade.

Instead, Hubbell found space in the attic and crawl space below the house, transforming roughly the back third of the home to a split-level, with two bedrooms

and a play area on the top level and the kitchen and dining area below. The result is a much more open, livable, 1,807-square-foot floor plan for the family.

Hubbell worked with Jon Walsh of J Walsh Construction, who ensured elements of the addition integrated with the existing home.

"We kept the same language and vernacular throughout the house," Walsh said. "All the architectural details were repeated and carried through."

The carry though included such elements as the original picture rail molding and traditional multi-piece doors and window casings. Existing historical windows on the sides of the home were relocated as floor and ceiling heights changed. In one case, Walsh said, cabinets covered a window that was lowered for the kitchen. But because the window



The front of this 1910 Craftsman home, which includes the living room (top), remained untouched, while the back of the home (above) was divided into a split level to create more space.

was historical and it couldn't be modified, they had to paint the inside of some panes black to hide the cabinets from the outside.

The original living room, master bedroom and bath, as well as a study nook with bay windows on the main floor were left untouched during the remodel. Behind that, Hubbell designed an L-shaped staircase that leads down to the new kitchen/dining area and up to the children's bedrooms and bathroom. Because of the dormers in the roof, the bedrooms have sloped ceilings and unusual nooks and crannies. One room has a loft space that is used for the bed.

"That was a happy accident," Walsh said, explaining he had a "sudden brainstorm" about it while doing a walk-through with the owner.

Once the entire attic was opened, Hubbell and Walsh also found room a half level up for a separate children's play space. The only completely new structure added to the home is a balcony



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A completely new kitchen was created by utilizing the home's crawl space. An adjoining dining area and a small bathroom were also added to the downstairs space.

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The attic was utilized for the children’s rooms and a bathroom. Care was taken to blend the additions with the original home. “We kept the same language and vernacular throughout the house,” said Jon Walsh of J Walsh Construction.

Mission Hills

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ny off the back, which can be accessed through both children’s rooms by sliding glass doors and is shaded by a sycamore tree.

Additions and renovations to the new lower level include a completely new, expanded kitchen that is open to a dining area. Before, the kitchen was tiny, cramped and closed off from the dining room. Now, white cabinets and counters make the space feel more modern. The flow from kitchen to dining room is easy and natural, and there’s room for children or guests to eat at the counter.

Hubbell also added a small half-bathroom downstairs and moved the laundry room. Excavating the crawl space and adding the lower half of the split-level also better connected the home to the backyard. Before, the home, which sat above the yard,



Because of the home’s dormer windows, the rooms in the attic have sloped ceilings and unusual nooks and crannies.

could only be reached through the laundry room. Now, double sliding doors open the dining area to the patio.

Unseen in the finished product is the work done to reinforce the structure. Turning a single-story Craftsman home into “something with four different levels...and have it still look like a

Craftsman-style home was a challenge,” Walsh said.

In the former attic, some center king posts and cords from the original trusses were removed to open up the space. This meant that additional framing had to be added to the rafters, along with reinforced floor and ceiling joists and structural steel in the up-

stairs framing so it could bear the heavier loads. Walsh and his team accomplished all this without making any alterations to the exterior siding.

Preserving and working with historical homes is one of Hubbell’s passions, and he knew this project needed a great deal of planning and communication with the City of San Diego Planning Department. Walsh inspected the home before plans were even drawn up, and Hubbell talked to planners and got feedback before submitting the project for permitting. Thanks to this preparation, Hubbell and Walsh were aware of potential issues during construction, which was completed in late 2013.

“It was a fantastic, fascinating project with a great architect and homeowner,” Walsh said. “One of the most rewarding projects we’ve ever worked on.”

Allison Keltner is a San Diego freelance writer.